

REFERENCES

- BERZIN, A.A. (1972): The Sperm Whale. In: A.V. Yabolokov (Ed.) Israel programme for scientific translations. 1-394. (Translated from Russian).
- JAMES, D.B. & K.C.S. PANICKER (1990): On a sperm whale landed at Kalpeni Island with notes on ambergris. *Mar. Fish. Infor. Serv., T.E. Ser. No. 104*: 11-14.

11. FIRST RECORD OF THE ROSY PELICAN *PELECANUS ONOCROTALUS* LINNAEUS IN KERALA

The Rosy Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus* Linnaeus is recorded as a common winter visitor to Pakistan and North India, from Punjab to Assam, Andhra Pradesh and Madras. But, so far there is no record of this species from Kerala.

In the course of our routine field observation at Vellimukkuchali, a swampy area in Tirur taluk, Malappuram district, Kerala, on the morning of 18th December 1992 we noted eight birds floating in water. At first sight itself it was very much evident that they were pelicans. Since we have had field guides with us we identified them as Rosy Pelicans. Rose tinged white colour, long characteristic beak and marginal black feathers (primaries and secondaries) in the wings showed that Kerala got an addition to its list of birds. We observed them for about two hours. After two hours they flew upward, made 3-4 rounds there and slowly flew away

from our sight. The locals told us that the pelicans had arrived in the early morning that day.

After a few days we received information on the sighting of the same species from Arkulum lake, Trivandrum.

Recently, Kerala is being revisited by hitherto unrecorded birds. For example, we observed and photographed the Flamingos last year on 9th January 1991 at Ponnani.

February 5, 1993

TYTUS T. JACOB

P. PRAMOD

K. GANGADHARAN

M. MAHESH

*Department of Zoology, University of Calicut,
Kerala 673 635.*

12. ROSY PELICANS *PELECANUS ONOCROTALUS* LINN., IN THE HIMALAYA

In May of 1992 I was resting at over 3050 m on the Patalsu mountain which is a 4250 m fermentation of a spur south of the prominent Sheeti Dhar range at the head of the Beas Valley separating the southern valleys of Kulu from the arid trans montane regions of Lahaul and Ladakh beyond.

It was a brilliant morning and updrafts had just started with the first clouds forming above each column of rising air. A wonderful day for large gliding birds like vultures, lammergeyers, eagles and storks and pelicans. Just as I thought of pelicans, I saw a tight group of eleven white birds which indeed were Rosy Pelicans! I must have watched them circling and going higher and higher for

full fifteen minutes till, as mere specks they flew west parallel to the mountain range.

This is perhaps what they normally do in their migration from the plains of India towards Central Asia. For great gliders like the Pelicans the snow range is in striking distance from the lowlands and the series of updrafts along the western flanks of the Dhauladhar Range overlooking Kangra and Punjat convenient for covering immense distances. As far as I know there are no records of Pelicans migrating across Tibet.

November 3, 1993

LAVKUMAR KHACHER

646, Vastunirman, Gandhinagar 382 022.

13. SOUTHERNMOST RECORD OF COMMON POCHARD *AYTHYA FERINA* (LINNAEUS) AND TUFTED DUCK *AYTHYA FULIGULA* (LINNAEUS) IN MADURAI DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU

While conducting midwinter waterfowl counts during 1990 and 1991 Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* and Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* were sighted on three irrigation tanks. During 1990 the birds were sighted on Vellari Kanmai tank, about 20 km from Madurai and Urappanur Tank, a few kilometres south of Madurai. During 1991 about 400 Common Pochards were sighted in Kunnatur irrigation tank, east of Madurai.

Madurai is out of the known range of both the species. According to Ali and Ripley (1983) the species is seen decreasingly southward in the peninsula, irregularly to Karnataka and not recorded further south. Their southernmost record is from Pondicherry (Perennou 1989). The Tufted Duck was recorded as occurring in Madurai District (Nichols 1945) but there does not seem to be any record after that.

This is possibly the southernmost record of Common Pochard and the second record of the occurrence of Tufted Pochard after 45 years in its southern most range.

May 28, 1994

T. BADRI NARAYANAN

6, Nanmai Thaeuvae Koil Street, (Near West Masi Street),
Madurai 625 001, Tamil Nadu (India).

REFERENCES

ALI, S. & S.D. RIPLEY (1983): Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan (Compact Edition). Oxford University Press, Delhi.

Bombay nat. Hist. Soc. 45(2): 122.
PERENNOU, C. (1989): Southern Wintering range of some water birds. *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.* 86 (2):247-248

NICHOLS, K.G. (1945): Occurrence of Birds in Madurai District. *J.*

14. RARE CRANE OF INDIA

On 2nd of December 1992 while entering within the Bhutanghat Forests of the core area of Buxa Tiger Reserve a pair of Blacknecked crane *Grus nigricollis* Przevalski was sighted, on a freshly harvested paddy field.

This large crane having a black neck, and a milky white body, breeds in Ladakh. The reports of the wintering of these cranes were so far known only from the upper reaches of Bhutan and the hills of Arunachal Pradesh not below 2000 m altitude. The pair sighted in Mainabari Beat of Buxa Tiger reserve near Bhutanghat Forest is more or less a Bhabar tract having an altitude of 200 m. only.

The Director of the International Crane Foundation, George Archibald has confirmed that the photograph of the crane taken within Buxa Tiger Reserve as of the

Blacknecked Crane and stated that it as an extremely unusual drop in the wintering habits for the species to be found in the Indian plains. Interestingly enough the local villagers confirmed its arrival every year during this period and the Wild Life Conservator Shri M.K. Nandi, has also confirmed sighting of this species at Chapramari sanctuary of West Bengal which again is a bhabar area.

This first report of a Blacknecked Crane in West Bengal; as well as from any place at such low altitude during the winter season is noteworthy. Let us hope for sighting this bird every year in Buxa Tiger Reserve.

April 10, 1993

P. SANYAL

Buxa Tiger Reserve, Alipurduar Court 736 122,
Jalpaiguri, W. Bengal.

15. COMMENTS ON THE NOTE OCCURRENCE OF BLACK TERN *CHLIDONIAS NIGER* (LINNAEUS) AT POINT CALIMERE BY VIVEK MENON

The occurrence of black tern *Chlidonias niger* at Point Calimere was earlier reported by Abdulali and Ambedkar (1983) and Natarajan and Balasubramanian (1990). Its further occurrence at Point Calimere had been confirmed

under the Bird Migration studies conducted by the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) by ringing 48 individuals of the same species by me between 1989-1991. Also 17 individuals were ringed at Kaliveli Lake and one from

TABLE 1
MEASUREMENTS OF *CHLIDONIAS NIGER*

Wing	Bill (from feather)	Tarus	Outer	Tail	Central	Fork	n
201-226	25-30	15-18	69 (Cramp 1985)		57	10-16	38
205-210	23-26	-	70-76 (Natarajan & Balasubramanian 1990)		64-66	6-10	3
194-222	23-27	17-22	62-82 (Balachandran, unpubl.)		-	-	48
202	28.5	17	(Mohapatra, unpubl.)			-	1
257	40	19	107		63	44	1